CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for operating a portable computing device, the method comprising:

2   coupling a signal line accessible through an outlet of the portable computing

3   device to a communication device;

4   detecting a signal on the signal line to determine whether the communication

5   device is actively connected to a portable computing device; and

6   suspending execution of at least a portion of a program, the portion of the program

7   reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   suspending occurrence of a timeout feature, wherein the time-out feature significantly

4   reduces power consumption of the portable computing device.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, including sending communications from the portable

2   computing device using the communication device when the communication device is

3   actively connected to the portable computing device.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein coupling a signal line includes extending the

2   signal line to a pin element of a pin connector forming the outlet.

1   5.   The method of claim 2, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   selectively suspending the occurrence of the time-out feature when the communication

4   device is actively coupled.

1   6.   The method of claim 2, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   disabling the time-out feature while the communication device is actively coupled.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein detecting the signal includes measuring a voltage

2   level of the signal.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein detecting a signal from the communication device

2   includes coupling the portable computing device to the communication device using a pin

3   connector, and wherein one pin in the pin connector extends into the signal line.

1   9.   The method of claim 2, including launching a program that is downloaded to the

2   portable computing device through the communication device once the occurrence of the

3   time-out feature is suspended.

1   10.   The method of claim 2, including launching a program once the occurrence of the

2   time-out feature is suspended, the program providing a display selected from a group of

3   displays consisting of a world clock, a digital image stored from a digital camera device,

4   and a display of real-time information provided by a data network.

1   11.   The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   determining a programmable backlight of a display to be operational while the

4   communication device is coupled.

1   12.   The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   programming a backlight of a display to be selectively operational while the

4   communication device is coupled.

1   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a

2   program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes

3   programming the display to be operational when the backlight of the display is selected to

4   be operational.

1   14.   The method of claim 12, including executing a program upon detecting the signal

2   on the signal line to reorganize an output arrangement of a database.

1   15.   A detachable assembly, comprising:

2   a communication device; and

3   a portable computing device adapted to couple to the communication device, the

4   portable computing device including:

5   a signal line that is adapted to couple to an output node of the

6   communication device; and

7   a processor coupled to detect a signal on the signal line to determine

8   whether the communication device is actively connected to the portable computing

9   device;

10   wherein the processor is programmed to suspend execution of at least a

11   portion of a program upon detecting the communication device, the portion of the

12   program reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.

1   16.   The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the communication device includes

2   an alternating current adapter for supplying power to the portable computing device.

1   17.   The detachable assembly of claim 16, wherein the processor suspends an

2   occurrence of a timeout feature that significantly reduces power consumption by the

3   portable computing device.

1   18.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the signal line extends to a pin

2   element of a pin connector forming the outlet.

1   19.   The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the processor selectively suspends

2   an occurrence of the time-out feature upon the communication device actively coupling to

3   the portable computing device.

1   20.   The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the processor disables the time-out

2   feature upon the communication device actively coupling to the portable computing

3   device.

1   21.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the signal is a voltage level

2   provided by the output node of the communication device.

1   22.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the portable computing device

2   couples to the communication device using a pin connector, and wherein one pin in the pin

3   connector extends into the signal line.

1   23.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein a program is downloaded to the

2   portable computing device using the communication device once the occurrence of the

3   time-out feature is suspended.

1   24.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor launches a program

2   once the occurrence of the time-out feature is suspended, the program providing a display

3   selected from a group of displays consisting of a clock, a digital image, and a display of

4   real-time information provided by a data network.

1   25.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor suspends execution of

2   at least a portion of a program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing

3   device, the portion of the program providing a backlight of a display to be operational

4   while the communication device is coupled.

1   26.   The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor suspends execution of

2   at least a portion of a program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing

3   device, the portion of the program providing a backlight of a display to be selectively

4   operational while the communication device is coupled.

1   27.   The detachable assembly of claim 26, wherein the portion of the program provides

2   for the display to be operational when the backlight of the display is selected to be

3   operational.

1   28.   The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the portion of the program provides

2   for reorganizing an output arrangement of a data base.

1   29.   A portable computing device, comprising:

2   means for coupling a signal line accessible through an outlet of the portable

3   computer device to a communication device;

4   means for detecting a signal on the signal line to determine whether the

5   communication device is actively connected to a portable computing device; and

6   means for suspending execution of at least a portion of a program, the portion of

7   the program reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.